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Foundations of College Writing-Dr. Sherry

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College Drinking

Problem

Everyone has a different view of what college life should be like. Some go to college to get a good education to get their dream job while others go to college merely for the parties and to socialize. Although, the truth is the majority of students at a university do drink frequently even if they are at school for a good education. The question is why? Why do some students choose to pay thousands a dollars a year to get a good education, but risk it all when they drink and does drinking actually help them or hurt them? In this paper I found research from multiple academic journals ones titled: “The Way One Think Affects The Way One Drinks”(2013), 'The Disparity Between Social Drinking Motives And Social Outcomes”(2013), and “Drinking Consequences And Subsequent Drinking In College Students Over 4 Year”(2014). Lastly, I got some data from interviewing some of my peers at Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania.

Background

“Approximately 80% of college students drink alcohol and 50% engage in binge drinking”(Grant, 2013, pg96)¹. Some might be surprised that the number is so high but other may not. I feel TV has a big impact on this, if college was not advertised on TV as frequently with the concept of drinking and parties I feel less students would do it. All of the studies show that college students drink for many different reasons whether it be for social motives, coping,

¹INtroduce

enhancement, or conformity. It is found that, “Among college students, social motives are consistently rated more highly than any other drinking motive”(Grant, 2013, pg97).² It seems that students believe that they can make friends from going to a party and drinking. This is due to the fact that college students just want to fit in thus make friends, many believe the way to do that is to party. Studies show, “more specifically, it is not clear how alcohol use is related to establishing new friendships in college”(Grant, 2013, pg 98). This quote is stating that there is no evidence that actually shows that drinking alcohol will result in friendships.³ This is just a concept students made up and probably got the idea from TV. Studies do show that sharing a common interest such as a hobby or sport is a good way to make friends. Although, college students believe otherwise and that is one of the main reasons why 80% of young adults drink.

Studies show that “college students' heavy drinking poses a significant public health problem”(Martinez, 2014, pg 1240)⁴. This quote and Martinez's study proves that drinking can lead to major health problems that will then affect one's work in school. If one is in the hospital the next morning from drinking the night before, how do you expect that student's grades to rise? Doing poorly in school is not the only affect drinking will have on a student, it is shown “moreover, many alcohol consequences (e.g., drunk driving, academic impairment, sexual assault) have effects that can extend well beyond the college years”(Merrill, 2013, pg 42).⁵ This means that not only will one suffer in college but they could also suffer after college too.⁶ Sexual assault can affect a person emotionally for years after and so can drunk driving. Imagine getting into a car accident and not being able to walk for the rest of your life? These are just some of the

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long lasting effects alcohol can have on a person.

Method

Now we know that alcohol does harm individuals and most drink for social reasons, the next question that raises is why do students risk it all just for a few possible new friends? College is not cheap so the fact that so many students each year are binge drinking surprises me. I understand everyone wants to have a little fun but when is it too much fun? I interviewed a few college students and asked them about their reasons for this.

Findings

As I interviewed different students I asked them why they drink.⁷ Some said they drink because it gives them something fun to do and for the college experience, while others expressed the drink to forget about all the stresses of college. Many said that there is not much to do over the weekends at Bloomsburg so going out to party is a great thing to do and way to meet new people.⁸ We all have different reasons for why we drink but I think it is interesting that one drinks to forget about his or her stressful classes. I feel that binge drinking according to the research is not the right thing to do even if it does make you forget things. With all of the health risks and risk of failing out of school I feel it is not worth it.⁹ Another student said they drink mostly because they are encouraged to by peers. Both students said that they have seen students drink to get people to like them or to be part of an organization. Although, my thoughts are that if they will only be your friends if you drink, it is simply not worth it.

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Conclusion

Most of my findings were very similar to my research, in which most meet new friends at parties but I found more reasons young adults will drink from talking to actual college students. Talking to college students got me to understand that students drink due to peer pressure or to forget about stressful things. I did not find any of this in my research. The research simply stating for social reasons but did not go into as much detail. I feel talking to students that actually have the experience to be more informational than reading about an article about it. In conclusion, from my research I found that students drink for many reasons, whether it be to make new friends, peer pressure, to get the college experience, or to let loose and forget about stressful things. Out of all of these reasons for why students drink none of them result in positive results. To change the numbers of the students who do drink we need to make students aware of the harms of drinking and show them there are other things one can do to make friendships or do get rid of stress.

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